



LABOUR'S MANIFESTO FOR THE WEST MIDLANDS



**FOR THE MANY
NOT THE FEW**

FOREWORD

Britain needs a government that works for the whole country. When Labour says we stand for the many not the few, we mean we will build a fairer country, where no one is held back and every community has its fair share of wealth and power.

The harmful inequality that scars our society is not an act of God or a law of physics. It is the result of deliberate Conservative government policy that has made us one of the most unequal countries in Europe – both between the billionaires at the very top and everybody else, and between the different parts of the UK.

It's time to bring a divided country together so we can get on with delivering the real change Britain needs. To drive that change we will unleash a record investment blitz, getting the economy moving in every corner of our country.

This is about the jobs at the end of your road. It's about breathing new life into your area; reviving your high street; restoring the pride to your community.

Our investment blitz will upgrade our infrastructure in every town, city and region, and rebuild our schools, hospitals, care homes and housing. This is investment on a scale our country has never known.

Margaret Thatcher's Conservatives tried to wipe out British industry in the 1980s. This Conservative government is continuing that legacy. Over the last decade almost half a million manufacturing jobs have been lost.

The wealthy and powerful who have the system rigged in their favour will tell you that real change isn't possible. They'll say it's unrealistic. They'll say we cannot afford decent housing, free education, or well-paid, secure jobs.

But we know change is not only possible, but necessary. This election is our last chance to tackle the climate and environmental emergency and a once in a generation chance to transform our country, take on the vested interests and ensure that no community is left behind

So the next Labour government will rebuild our economy and bring our country back together by kick-starting a Green Industrial Revolution that will make every region a world-leader in green industries – the cutting edge industries of the future.

Labour will put wealth and power in the hands of the many. Boris Johnson's Conservatives, who think they're born to rule, will only look after the privileged few.

So we're going after the tax dodgers. We're going after the dodgy landlords. We're going after the bad bosses. We're going after the big polluters. Because we know whose side we're on – your side.

And when Labour wins, the nurse wins, the pensioner wins, the student wins, the office worker wins, the engineer wins. Every region wins. We all win.



Jeremy Corbyn,
Leader of the Labour Party

1. INTRODUCTION

Labour will unlock the potential of everyone by building a fairer Britain. A Britain in which we care for each other, in which wealth and power are shared, and in which every part of the country gets its fair share of investment and its say in shaping our future.

Years of under-investment and neglect by Westminster have left too many parts of the West Midlands stuck with underpaid jobs, low productivity and slow growth.

Under the Tories, too many people in the West Midlands are struggling to make ends meet or finding that work is no longer a way out of poverty. Across the UK pay has stagnated while insecurity and inequality have risen. Wages are still lower than before the financial crisis, while across the country dividends paid to shareholders are up 85%.

A decade of Tory cuts has pushed public services in the West Midlands to breaking point.

Labour has a plan to deliver real change for the West Midlands.

We will kick start a Green Industrial Revolution that will tackle the climate crisis while creating over 120,000 good jobs in the West Midlands and expanding the automotive and renewable energy industries.

We will make sure everyone has enough to live on and eradicate in-work poverty in our first term by tackling the causes of poverty and inequality, such as low pay and high living costs, while raising the floor provided by our social safety net.

We will rebuild our public services and make them the best and most extensive in the world, paid for by creating a fairer taxation system in which those with the broadest shoulders pay a little more and everyone pays what they owe.

Labour is on the West Midlands' side.

2. Top commitments for the West Midlands

- £11 billion new investment from Labour's Green Transformation Fund including a gigafactory in Stoke, a metals reprocessing plant and electric vehicles manufacturing**
- Connect 2.7 million households and businesses to full-fibre Broadband**
- 11,000 new council and social homes a year by the end of the Parliament**
- Over 120,000 new well-paid green jobs**
- An immediate pay rise for 685,000 workers aged 16 and over**

3. Transforming the West Midlands

3.1 Labour's Green Industrial Revolution

Labour's Green Industrial Revolution will make the West Midlands wealthier and healthier, putting our economy and climate on a stable footing to thrive in the 21st century.

From Boulton and Watt's steam engine, to the Staffordshire potteries, to Birmingham's "city of a thousand trades", the West Midlands is renowned for its industry and inventiveness.

The region is also home to one of the UK's manufacturing success stories, the automotive industry. But it is a sector that has found itself under siege in recent years from the Tory's do-nothing industrial strategy that has seen the UK fall behind in the race to produce the next generation of electric vehicles, the threat of a Tory no-deal Brexit, and continuing effects of Tory austerity.

Labour will kickstart a Green Industrial Revolution to transform the prospects of the West Midlands and its people, investing £11 billion out of Labour's Green Transformation Fund.

This includes:

- A 'Gigafactory' in Stoke, match funded by the private sector, to produce batteries for electric vehicles, creating 4,500 jobs across the West Midlands.

- Investment in manufacturing electric vehicles and expanding the electric vehicle charging network in the region, protecting 62,000 workers directly employed in the automotive sector, reducing emissions and improving air quality.
- A metal reprocessing plant to reprocess cobalt and rare earth minerals used in batteries, reducing the environmental impact of electric vehicles and creating 750 jobs.
- Plastic recycling facilities, match funded by the private sector, so that the UK no longer relies on exporting its plastic waste to the rest of world.
- Upgrading the housing of almost all of the 2.4 million households across the West Midlands, reducing bills, eliminating the vast majority of fuel poverty, and making our homes healthier and more comfortable.
- Investment in small-scale, community-level and large-scale solar power.
- Investing in onshore wind power.
- Upgrading the internet connection of 2.7 million households and businesses to Full-Fibre Broadband – the highest possible standard of connectivity.

- Planting more than 31 million new trees across the West Midlands by 2024, creating 10,368 hectares of new forest in areas such as the Malvern Hills.

If you live, work or do business in the West Midlands you will benefit from Labour's Green Industrial Revolution.

It will mean 120,000 new skilled, well-paid jobs in West Midlands that will last long into the future. Labour's new climate apprenticeships will ensure local people can access these jobs and become the engineers, technicians and construction workers of tomorrow.

It will mean new opportunities for businesses working across the region, such as those specialising in renovation and home maintenance and a growing local economy, with new wealth rippling out across all sectors.

And because Labour will take a public stake in new projects, we will improve towns and cities across the West Midlands by reinvesting profits in our public spaces.

3.2 Local transport

For these new green industries to flourish and grow, and for the hundreds of thousands of new green jobs to be accessible to communities across the West Midlands, they must be connected to the wider economy. This requires decent public transport.

The West Midlands has seen years of underfunding in all forms of transport. Spending per person was £606 lower than in London last year.

If the Tories win the General Election, transport funding to the West Midlands will continue to be £944 per head lower than in London over the years ahead.

Over the last decade we've seen the number of bus journeys reduce by 19% in the West Midlands.

Labour will end this unfairness by investing to improve public transport across the West Midlands.

3.3 Devolving Spending

Labour will make sure that investment is spread evenly across the whole country by giving powers and funding to the West Midlands. We will bring about a radical shift of power in Britain away from Westminster so that local people and communities have more control over their own lives and prospects.

We will create an Office of Government in the West Midlands to co-ordinate policies at the regional level, and ensure the West Midlands has a voice in Whitehall. A Local Transformation Fund will be used exclusively to fund infrastructure projects decided at a local level by people in the West Midlands.

Labour will create a West Midlands Development Bank to make sure the West Midlands gets its share of investment for small businesses, infrastructure projects and funding for new growth industries. Priorities for lending will be set by boards made up of key local stakeholders such as local chambers of commerce, trade unions and councillors giving the West Midlands a new and powerful lever to rebuild its economy on its own terms.

Under the Tories, bank branches are closing, small businesses are struggling to access finance, and high streets are being decimated by store closures and job losses.

Labour's new publicly owned Post Bank, run through the Post Office network, will provide loans for small businesses, coops and social enterprises. 353 Post Office branches across the West Midlands will host the Post Bank, providing the people of the West Midlands with face-to-face, trusted and affordable banking and free support and advice on how to launch, manage and grow a business.



4. Work and social security

Work should provide a decent life for all, guaranteeing not just dignity and respect in the workplace, but also the income and leisure time to allow for a fulfilling life outside it.

Labours will rapidly introduce a Real Living Wage of £10 an hour giving a pay rise to approximately 685,000 workers aged 16 and over, across the West Midlands, and use savings to public finances to help small businesses manage the extra cost.

We will end insecure and precarious work for approximately 73,000 people in the West Midlands by banning

zero-hour contracts and giving workers a right to a contract that reflects the hours they regularly work.

The Tories' flagship social security programme, Universal Credit (UC) has been a catastrophe. It has pushed thousands of people into poverty, caused families to lose their homes and forced parents to visit food banks in order to feed their children.

Labour will scrap UC and replace it with a system dedicated to dignity, universalism and ending poverty. We will spare 633,000 people in the West Midlands set to be on UC by

immediately stopping people moving onto it and designing an alternative system that treats people with dignity and respect.

Over the course of three years we will end people's dependence on food banks. In 2018/19, Trussell Trust food banks handed out 142,000 three-day emergency food parcels to people in crisis across the West Midlands. That included 51,000 parcels to children.

We will also bring justice to 322,000 women born in the 1950s across the West Midlands whose State Pension age has been unfairly changed by the Tories. We have a historic debt of honour to them and Labour will offer pay-outs of up to £31,000, with an average of £15,000, to compensate them.

We will maintain the Triple Lock on state pensions, protecting the incomes of 1.1 million pensioners across the West Midlands.

The Tory decision to u-turn on their manifesto pledge and end the free TV license for over-75s is set to affect almost 377,000 households across the West Midlands, costing pensioners a total of £56 million. Labour will reverse this cruel and unnecessary cut, and restore free TV licences for over-75s.



5. Public Services

5.1 National Education Service

Education makes our economy stronger, our society richer and our people more fulfilled. Whether it is businesses finding people with the right skills, a tech start-up making our economy more dynamic or more people in better paid work and able to contribute to public services, we all benefit from an educated society.

The Conservatives have starved our education system of funding, transferring costs onto students, staff and communities and those in need have lost out most.

That's why our National Education Service will be at the heart of Labour's plan for real change.

We will reverse cuts to Sure Start so that all communities across the West Midlands have access to a Sure Start centre in their area.

We will give all 2, 3 and 4-year olds 30 hours of free preschool education per week and access to additional hours at affordable, subsidised rates staggered with incomes. In the West Midlands this will provide free childcare to over 188,000 children, saving families between £364 and £5,740 a year.

As a result of Tory underfunding there are now 2,217 unqualified teachers across the West Midlands and almost 59,000 primary school children in over-sized classes.

Labour will make sure schools are properly funded to guarantee that every school in the West Midlands has a qualified teacher in front of every class and is open a full five days a week, and to cap primary school class sizes at 30.

As a result of Tory failure there are now an extra 108,000 children in working households living in poverty in the West Midlands. To tackle this crisis, Labour will 'poverty-proof' schools, providing a free school meal to almost 525,000 primary school children in the West Midlands, encouraging breakfast clubs, and tackling the cost of school uniforms.

5.2 NHS and Social Care

The National Health Service is one of Labour's proudest achievements. The right to free-at-the-point-of-use healthcare, universal and comprehensive in scope, is socialism in action.

A decade of Tory health cuts and privatisations has pushed our greatest institution to the brink. Our hospitals are crumbling, we have a shortage of 43,000 nurses, and patients are left waiting far too long.

In the Midlands Commissioning Region, the number of people waiting for an operation has now reached over 749,000.

Since 2010, the number of people waiting longer than 4 hours in A&E has soared. In the first 6 months of 2019/20, over 373,000 people waited more than 4 hours in A&E in the Midlands.

A Labour government will invest in the NHS to give patients the modern, well-resourced services they need. We will increase expenditure across the health sector by an average 4.3% a year.

We will end the social care crisis that has left 1.5 million elderly people across the country without the care they need. A Labour government will build a comprehensive National Care Service for England.

We will start by providing free personal care to all older people who need it, and seek to extend this to all working-age adults.

5.3 Police and crime

Government has a duty to keep people safe. Our communities were endangered when the Conservatives took 3,284 police officers off the streets of the West Midlands.

Government funding to police services has been cut by £330 million across forces in the West Midlands. As a result there are 3,284 fewer officers, 516 fewer

police community support officers and 1,245 fewer police staff.

In the last year, recorded crime across the West Midlands increased by 4%, including violence which is up 16% and robbery which has increased 17%. Over the past five years, knife crime in the West Midlands has risen by 107%.

Last year the police recorded over 6 million offences, but the proportion leading to a charge or summons fell to its lowest level on record – thanks to Tory cuts, less than one in ten crimes now lead to a suspect being charged.

A Labour government will invest in policing to prevent crime and make our communities safer.

We will rebuild the whole police workforce, recruiting more police officers, police community support officers and other staff across the UK. We will re-establish neighbourhood policing and recruit 2,000 more frontline officers than the Conservatives.

In addition to our commitment to recruit more frontline officers, we will guarantee a nationwide network of youth clubs and other services for young people as a way of tackling problems such as mental ill-health and school exclusions, as well as involvement in knife and drug crime.



6. Communities, Local Government and Housing

Tory cuts, which have been deliberately targeted at the poorest areas of the country, have plunged our councils into crisis and pushed many services to breaking point. The West Midlands has seen 22% of funding stripped from council budgets by consecutive Tory governments.

Labour will reverse the Tory decade of austerity for local government and aim to restore council spending powers to 2010 levels over the lifetime of the Parliament, meaning more money for key local services such as libraries and bin collections.

The country is facing a housing crisis. The number of socially rented homes built has fallen over the past decade by 2,106 to 1,661 last year in the West Midlands, while private rent has gone up by an average of £1,104 over the last 10 years. Labour will be building approximately 11,000 new council and social homes a year in the West Midlands by the end of the Parliament.

Labour will also deliver new discounted homes for first-time buyers and a new charter of rights for private renters.

No one should sleep without a roof over their head in one of the richest countries in the world. But under the Tories, the number of people sleeping rough has more than doubled.

In the West Midlands, at least 420 people slept rough last year. Labour will end rough sleeping within five years, with a national plan driven by a Prime Minister-led taskforce.

We will tackle the wider causes of homelessness, raising the Local Housing Allowance in line with the 30th percentile of local rents, and earmarking an additional £1 billion a year for councils' homelessness services.



7. Environment

Nearly a decade of Tory neglect has led to more litter on our streets, with reported incidences of fly-tipping rising by 28 per cent across the West Midlands.

In government, Labour will implement a comprehensive Waste and Recycling Strategy, investing £200 million in new plastic recycling facilities for the West Midlands and introducing new measures such as bottle recycling schemes.

More than 3.7 million people across the West Midlands live in areas where air quality is illegally poor, with Birmingham

and Wolverhampton among the worst polluted parts of the country. The Tories have lost in court three times over their failure to reduce air pollution, but Labour will introduce a new Clean Air Act to tackle the problem head-on.

We will create 10 new National Parks across the country in areas such as the Malvern Hills and the Wye Valley, and will increase funding for existing National Parks including the Peak District.

